

Message Text

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ACTION EA-09

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AMEMBASSY MANILA
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AMEMBASSY SEOUL
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C O N F I D E N T I A L TOKYO 5677

E.O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: PFOR, JA, XC
SUBJECT: ARITA VISIT TO SOUTHEAST ASIA

REF: 1. MANILA 4707; 2. KUALA LUMPUR 2179; 3. JAKARTA 4460;
4. BANGKOK 7886; 5. JAKARTA 3966

SUMMARY: DURING POST-US-JAPAN SUMMIT SWING THROUGH SOUTHEAST ASIA, FONOFF DEPMIN ARITA FOUND PERSISTENT DOUBT OF US COMMITMENT TO REGION, WORRY OVER DEVELOPING VIETNAMESE TIES WITH JAPAN AND US, AND APPRECIATION FOR PM FUKUDA'S CONSIDERATION IN SENDING ARITA TO REPORT ON SUMMIT. ONLY PHILIPPINES AND INDONESIA WERE UPSET BY US HUMAN RIGHTS STANCE. MEANWHILE, JAPANESE BUREAUCRACY IS DISCUSSING PLANS FOR FUKUDA TO VISIT ALL ASEAN CAPITALS, PLUS RANGOON, IN ADDITION TO APPEARING AT
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ASEAN SUMMIT IN AUGUST. TOKYO CONTINUES CAUTIOUS ABOUT JAPAN-ASEAN FORUM. END SUMMARY.

1. DEPUTY FOREIGN MINISTER KEISUKE ARITA RETURNED TO TOKYO APRIL 14 FROM POST-US-JAPAN-SUMMIT SWING THROUGH SIX SOUTHEAST ASIAN NATIONS. ACCORDING TO ASIA REGIONAL POLICY DIVDIR TAKEHIKO NISHIYAMA, FONOFF WAS QUITE PLEASED BY ARITA'S

RECEPTION AT EACH STOP, AND RATES TRIP A SUCCESS.

2. NISHIYAMA NOTED THAT TO FONOFF'S SURPRISE, TOP LEADERS OF ALL GOVERNMENTS (THE ASEAN FIVE PLUS BURMA) MET ARITA ON SHORT NOTICE. THEY SEEMED GRATEFUL FOR PM FUKUDA'S CONSIDERATION IN SENDING ARITA TO REPORT ON US-JAPAN SUMMIT. PERHAPS REFLECTING GROWING CONCERN THAT BURMA OVER-ISOLATED, NE WIN WENT SO FAR AS TO ARRANGE FOR ARITA TO BE BROUGHT TO MEET HIM AT RUSTIC RETREAT NEAR MANDALAY.

3. IN PHILIPPINES, INDONESIA, SINGAPORE AND THAILAND, ARITA FOUND CONSIDERABLE ANXIETY REGARDING US POSTURE TOWARD SOUTH-EAST ASIA. LEADERS THERE APPRECIATED FUKUDA'S INTERVENTION WITH THE PRESIDENT, NISHIYAMA SAID, AND WERE NOT ENTIRELY REASSURED BY LANGUAGE OF JOINT COMMUNIQUE. ARITA WAS TOLD THAT US EXPRESSIONS OF RESOLVE TO STAND BY ROK WERE DISTURBINGLY REMINISCENT OF THOSE US MADE ABOUT RVN AT TIME OF PARIS ACCORDS. ARITA IN REPLY EXPRESSED OPINION THAT THESE WERE VERY DIFFERENT CASES.

4. SEVERAL LEADERS, INCLUDING SUHARTO AND ESPECIALLY THANIN, WERE ANXIOUS REGARDING US-VIETNAM AND JAPAN-VIETNAM RELATIONS. THEY CAUTIONED AGAINST STEPS WHICH WOULD STRENGTHEN HANOI, AND SAW NORMALIZATION COUPLED WITH AID IN THIS LIGHT. ARITA IN REPLY EXPOUNDED FAMILIAR JAPANESE ARGUMENT THAT TO EXTENT VIETNAMESE INVOLVED WITH WEST, THE LESS THEIR SUSCEPTIBILITY TO SOVIET OR CHINESE PROXY MANAGEMENT AND THE LESS THEIR INCLINATION TO EXPORT REVOLUTION TO NEIGHBORS. HIS INTER-LOCUTORS NODDED, BUT URGED RESTRAINT.
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5. IN ONLY TWO COUNTRIES DID ARITA FIND DISSATISFACTION WITH US HUMAN RIGHTS POLICIES -- THE PHILIPPINES (ROMULO) AND INDONESIA (SUHARTO).

6. IN COURSE OF TRIP, ARITA ALSO DISCUSSED PROJECTED FUKUDA VISIT TO SOUTHEAST ASIA. FOLLOWING FUKUDA APPEARANCE AT ASEAN SUMMIT IN KUALA LUMPUR, FUKUDA MIGHT MAKE SHORT VISITS TO REMAINING ASEAN CAPITALS AND TO RANGOON. NISHIYAMA FAVORED THIS IDEA BECAUSE, HE SAID, WHEREAS THIS SUMMER JAPAN WOULD BE UNABLE TO DO MUCH FOR ASEA, IN BILATERAL VISITS FUKUDA "COULD SETTLE SOME OUTSTANDING PROBLEMS." HOWEVER, FUKUDA COULD NOT VISIT ONLY SOME WITHOUT OFFENDING OTHERS, AND JAPANESE DOMESTIC SITUATION WOULD MAKE TWO-WEEK TRIP, NECESSARY TO VISIT ALL, DIFFICULT TO ARRANGE.

7. EMBOFF ASKED NISHIYAMA ABOUT SECOND MEETING OF JAPAN-ASEAN FORUM, WHICH ACCORDING TO REF E IS EXPECTED TO TAKE PLACE IN TOKYO PRIOR TO ASEAN MINISTERIAL IN JULY. NISHIYAMA SAID ASEAN

SECRETARIAT WAS INTENT ON SECOND MEETING IN ORDER TO BE ABLE TO REPORT MORE PROGRESS TO THE MINISTERS, BUT JAPANESE HOPED TO SATISFY THEM FOR NONCE BY SIMPLY HAVING "TECHNICAL MEETINGS" FOLLOWING MEETINGS OF ASEAN TRADE AND INDUSTRIAL COMMITTEES.

8. DESPITE GOJ RELUCTANT ADMISSION AT FIRST JAPAN-ASEAN FORUM MEETING THAT FIVE ASEAN "GUIDELINES" WERE "ACCEPTABLE IN PRINCIPLE," JAPANESE WERE STILL GAGGING ON PRINCIPLE OF "ADDITIONALITY," NISHIYAMA SAID. LEAVING ASIDE QUESTION OF WHETHER TOKYO COULD COME UP WITH EXTRA MONEY FOR "ASEAN PROJECTS," NISHIYAMA SAID, ASEAN STATES' INSISTENCE THAT THESE WERE NOT NATIONAL PROJECTS DID NOT MAKE THEM SO. ADMINISTRATIVELY, UNDER GOVERNING JAPANESE REGULATIONS, THEY COULD NOT BE SEPARATED -- PARTICULARLY SINCE ASEAN COUNTRIES IN PRESENTATIONS TO WORLD BANK HAD INCLUDED THESE PROJECTS AS PART OF THEIR NATIONAL PLANS.

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